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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-first year

Identical letters dated 24 February 2006 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

It has been three days since our last communication on 21 February 2006, in which we conveyed our deep concern regarding the marked escalation of military aggression by Israel, the Occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the situation since that communication has seen further deterioration, threatening a comprehensive breakdown on the ground and on all levels. The past week has seen an increase in aggressive Israeli rhetoric, threats and actions against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority as the contending Israeli parties compete against one another for the upcoming elections on a platform of violence and aggression against the Palestinian people and their rights. Sadly, Palestinian blood has become a ticket in the upcoming Israeli elections and tragic events on the ground indicate that the situation will only get worse if the international community does not intervene promptly and firmly.

Israel, the Occupying Power, has escalated the situation on the ground by intensifying its military incursions into Palestinian towns in which cruel and inhumane measures have been taken against the affected Palestinian populations, including the targeting of civilians, medical staff and the injured. In the past week alone, Israeli occupation forces have carried out two separate and very violent military incursions into the Balata refugee camp, near Nablus City in the West Bank. So far, at least nine Palestinians have been killed in these military assaults while 70 others, including three medical staff, were injured. Numerous international and human rights organizations, including Doctors without Borders, have condemned the marked increase in violence against civilians, especially the targeting of medical staff and the injured and the obstruction of access to them. They have been horrified at the cruelty with which Israeli occupation forces have dealt with the civilian population in the Balata refugee camp, namely sealing off the camp even to ambulances, demolishing homes without prior warning and killing residents at random. The campaign against that refugee camp began earlier this month and as

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our most recent correspondence indicated, two Palestinians were killed in an incursion there.

Additionally, with the resumption with marked intensity of its unlawful campaign of extrajudicial executions of Palestinians, former influential Israeli senior security officials have suggested that even the newly elected Palestinian officials would not be immune from this unlawful policy. Threats of catastrophic implications have also been officially declared against the population in the Gaza Strip, with Israeli officials declaring that they could cut off the electricity supply in the Gaza Strip, reoccupy the northern Gaza Strip and expel its residents. The events in the Gaza Strip have also seen a marked escalation in violence as the Israeli bombardment of Palestinian neighbourhoods continues incessantly and Palestinians continue to suffer from these attacks and random firing by occupation soldiers near the borders. On 23 February 2006, Israeli occupation forces killed three Palestinians and injured another in the Gaza Strip in separate incidents, in addition to firing a missile at a car in an apparent failed extrajudicial execution attempt. Towns around Hebron and Nablus cities in the West Bank have been especially targeted in the past week, with Israeli occupation forces arresting at least eight and injuring a dozen Palestinians in separate incursions and house searches.

President Mahmoud Abbas, despite the apparent disinterest of the Israeli side in restoring calm, has once more reiterated the Palestinian commitment to a peaceful settlement of the conflict and has called on Israel, the Occupying Power to cease its military aggression and return immediately to the negotiating table. Unfortunately, these sincere Palestinian calls have so far been met with utter disdain, which intensifies as the election date in Israel approaches.

President Abbas has also appealed to the international community and the Quartet to intervene immediately and put an end to the grave escalation on the ground as the situation has become unbearable and critically dangerous. Such irresponsibility in the Israeli actions and such determination to drive the situation to a complete breakdown clearly demonstrates the urgent need to provide the Palestinian people with international protection from this violent and belligerent Israeli military occupation. Furthermore, it is of crucial importance for the international community to now confront this belligerent Israeli policy and unlawful actions with a firm and collective position. It must be made clear that Palestinian lives, international law and international humanitarian law are not expendable chips that the Occupying Power can discard at will.

The international community, in accordance with the rules and principles of international law, including international humanitarian law, has clear responsibilities in terms of ensuring the proper conduct of the Occupying Power, including compliance with its legal obligations and commitments. Moreover, measures must be taken to prevent the further escalation of this Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian civilian population that remains helpless and without any protection from the brute force of the Occupying Power. The continuation and intensification of Israel's military campaign against the Palestinian people will clearly lead only to more bloodshed and to more suffering by innocent civilians on both sides, which should be avoided at all costs.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 232 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-

S/2000/921) to 21 February 2006 (A/ES-10/321-S/2006/123) constitute a basic record of the crimes committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Accordingly, in a follow-up to the above-mentioned letters, it is my profound regret to inform you that, since our last letter to you, at least seven more Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces, raising the total number of martyrs killed since September 2000 to 3,797. (The names of the martyrs that have been identified are listed in the annex to the present letter.)

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council and the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

Annex to the identical letters dated 24 February 2006 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Names of martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* (Thursday, 23 February to Friday, 24 February 2006)

Thursday, 23 February 2006

1. Mohammed Shteiwi
2. Mohammad Khamees Ammar
3. Hassan Fathi Hajjaj (20 years old)
4. Ibrahim Mouhsen Al Seidi (19 years old)
5. Na'im Mohammad Abu Saris

Friday, 24 February 2006

1. Soulayman Hassan Al-Hamidi
2. Mohamad Ahmad Doukhan (21 years old)

* The total number of Palestinian martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces since 28 September 2000 is 3,797.